

PrEP in Italy: how many people access it and what kind of services are offered?

M Stizioli¹, GM Corbelli², M Falaguasta¹, E Nittolo¹

¹ PrEP in Italia, ² Plus Roma

Background

No official statistic is until now available on people using pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in Italy or on modalities for accessing clinics where it is prescribed. The first survey of this kind was conducted in 2019 by Plus, network of LGBT people living with HIV.

Material and methods

After three years, Plus, together with PrEP in Italy and in collaboration with INMI L. Spallanzani in Rome, conducted a new survey aimed at gathering data on PrEP centres and understanding how characteristics of people using PrEP changed. A questionnaire was sent out to 56 out of the 70 centres listed on the webpage www.prepinfo.it/chi-ti-segue (as per 14 of them, no email address was available, or they were only recently opened) in March and April 2022. The questionnaire addressed these topics: history of the PrEP centre, characteristics of users in care, HIV and STIs diagnosis both at baseline and during follow up, impact of COVID-19 on services, modalities and costs for accessing to services.

Results

The questionnaire was filled in by 28 centres, 13 located in the North, 11 in the Center, 4 in the South.

As per December 2021, 3641 people were in care for PrEP: a significant increase compared to 531 users in 2019. Most of them are MSM (3447 people, 94.6%; but they were 98% in 2019). There is a numeric increase in PrEP use among other demographic groups such as heterosexual cisgender men (80 in 2021, 7 in 2019), trans women (46 in 2021, 4 in 2019), cisgender women (22 in 2021, 4 in 2019) and intravenous drugs users (35 in 2021, 0 in 2019).

COVID-19 crisis had a great impact on access, causing temporary closure in 60% of centres. Only in one clinic access is possible only with a prescription by a general practitioner. In 90% specific exemptions are in use to grant free infectious diseases visits. As per IST testing, proportion of centres where specific exemptions are used is lower (65.5%).

Costs for services vary greatly: users can spend up to 36€ for the initial infectious diseases visit, 20€ for the follow up visits, 80€ for IST tests, 15 for biochemical testing. Users can spend at each follow-up visit up to 90€.

21 HIV infections were diagnosed at baseline, 12 during follow-up. IST diagnosis at baseline and follow-up are presented in the attached table.

Conclusions

At our knowledge, this is the only national data gathering about PrEP use in Italy. Access to

PrEP is still uneven on the Italian territory, with great disparities between North and South. People using PrEP are mostly MSM, despite some encouraging data among cisgender heterosexual men and trans women. Uniform implementation of PrEP services at the national level is therefore needed to facilitate access for all people who wish to use it and to obtain a greater impact on HIV epidemiology.

Città	Nome del centro	BASELINE					FOLLOW-UP				
		HIV	Sifilide	Gonorea	Clamidia	HCV	HIV	Sifilide	Gonorea	Clamidia	HCV
Benevento	AORN S.PIO - P.O. G. RUMMO- UOC MALATTIE INFETTIVE - BENEVENTO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bergamo	ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	19	35	0
Bologna	BLQ Checkpoint	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bologna	IRCCS Azienda Ospedaliero- universitaria di Bologna	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Genova	SAN MARTINO	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Latina	Centro di Riferimento AIDS - S.M. Goretti	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lecce	Ambulatorio di Malattie Infettive- ospedale Vito Fazzi	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Messina	AOU G. MARTINO POLICLINICO	0	5	3	1	0	0	5	3	1	0
Milano	IRCCS FONDAZIONE CA' GRANDA OSPEDALE MAGGIORE POLICLINICO DI MILANO	0	20	50	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
Milano	Milano Check Point	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Milano	Niguarda	4	15	25	20	0	4	80	130	120	0
Milano	Ospedale San Raffaele	6	0	0	0	0	2				
Milano	San Paolo	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	12	28	0
Monsevero	Centro di Immunologia	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Monza, Muggio'	Centro IST Muggio' (MB)	4	3	7	5	0	0	8	15	15	0
Padova	Unità Operativa Malattie Infettive e Tropicali, Azienda Ospedale Università Padova	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Palermo	ARNAS Ospedale Civico- Benfratelli	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Perugia	Ambulatorio PrEP Day Hospital Malattie Infettive Perugia Direttore Prof.Daniela Francisci	1	4	3	0	0	1	2	2	0	0
Pesaro	Malattie Infettive - Azienda Ospedaliera Ospedali Riuniti Marche Nord	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rimini	UO Malattie Infettive-Ospedale Infemi RN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roma	POLICLINICO TOR VERGATA	0	1	5	5	0		1	6	7	0
Roma	Polclinico umberto I	0	15	20	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
Roma	Polclinico Universitario "A. Gemelli"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roma	Spallanzani	0	39	55	63	4	1	80	130	130	2
Torino	Centro Multidisciplinare per la Salute Sessuale (CeMuSS)	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Trieste	CMST centro malattie a trasmissione sessuale	1	1	3	3	0	0	2	5	4	0
Verona	Osservatorio Infettivologico Aziendale ULSS 9 Scaligera	1	5	2	5	1	1	10	5	10	0
Vicenza	UO Malattie Infettive Ospedale San Bortolo Vicenza	0	3	2	1	0	0	3	2	1	0
TOTAL		21	118	177	149	6	12	212	329	351	5